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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Planning and Development Committee  
March 10, 2010

Testimony In Support of  
SB 303 AAC A Municipal Hotel Tax  
SB144 AAC Enhanced Regionalism  
SB 159 AAC Intermunicipal Cooperation and Enhanced Regionalism  
SB 199 AAC The State Plan of Conservation and Development  
HB 5331 AA Authorizing Municipalities to Join in State Contracts for the Purchase of Services  
HB 5338 AAC Local Plans of Conservation and Development  
HB 5383 AAC Regional Economic Development

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter. I participate in the Speakers MORE Commission, serving on both the Revenue Streams and Economic Development and Regional Entities Subcommittees. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

### 303

This bill, one of the recommendations of the Revenue Streams Subcommittee, provides a new source of revenue for the town through creation of a lodging tax. Sierra supports this measure, as it will, to a small extent, decrease our reliance on property taxes. Sierra holds that over-reliance on property taxes drives towns to make poor and environmentally damaging land use decisions.

### 144 and 159

These bills would set aside a small portion of the sales tax to be shared among several municipalities if derived from regional initiatives. Sierra strongly endorses this concept. Regional revenue sharing will eventually help to reduce our extreme reliance on property taxes.

However, the wording of these bills should be examined. To illustrate, assume a \$100 purchase. The sales tax would be six percent, or \$6.00. "One-quarter of one per cent of the amount of the sales tax", in the language of both bills, would be  $0.25 * 0.01 * 6$ , or \$0.015 (a penny and a half). If the intent is actually one-quarter of one percent of the purchase amount, this would be  $0.25 * 0.01 * 100 = \$0.25$ .

### 199

Written testimony on this bill will be submitted later when the actual language of the bill becomes available.

### 5331

Sierra supports this bill, which would extend the concept of towns receiving bulk purchasing rates by joining in state purchasing contracts for services.

**5338**

The bill places a 2 year moratorium on the requirement that towns update their Plans of Conservation and Development every 10 years. While it may have minimal impact for plans coming up for renewal, Sierra feels towns which are seriously delinquent should not be granted an additional two year delay.

**5383**

This bill creates the concept of a regional economic development district, which might address transportation, jobs, the environment, development, and responsible growth. Sierra feels that the state is poorly served by our over-reliance on home rule. 169 governments in a small state is a poor model for economic growth and protection of our natural resources. HB 5383 provides another pathway for regional cooperation. Sierra endorses it. Eventually, we hope these strategies will be centered around the state's Regional Planning Organizations.